

## What Was Attempted and What Has Been Achieved.

## THE WORK NOT OVER YET.

## Admiral Porter's Official Report.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, Dec. 29, 1864.

The Secretary of the Navy received this afternoon the following by special messenger:

NORTH ATLANTIC SQUADRON,  
U. S. FLAGSHIP MALVERN, AT SEA,  
OFF NEW INLET, Dec. 29, 1864.

Sir: I was in hope that I should have been able to present to the nation Fort Fisher and the surrounding works as a Christmas offering, but I am sorry to say it has not been taken yet. I attacked it on the 23rd inst., with the Ironclads Canonicus, Mahopac, Monadnock, Minnesota, Colorado, Mohican, Tuscarora, Wabash, Susquehanna, Brooklyn, Powhatan, Juniata, Seneca, Shenandoah, Patuxent, Ticonderoga, Mackinaw, Maumee, Yantic, Kansas, Iasco, Quaker City, Monticello, Rhode Island, Sassacus, Chippewa, Osceola, Tacony, Pontooner, Santiago de Cuba, Fort Jackson, and Vanderbilt, having a reserve of small vessels, consisting of the Arles, Honqua, Wilderess, Cherokee, A. D. Vance, Anconero, Eades, Gettysburg, Alabama, Keystone State, Bunker, Emma, Lillian, Tristram Shandy, Brittenia, Governor Buckingham and Nantuxet. Previous to making the attack a torpedo on a large scale, with an amount of powder on board supposed to be sufficient to explode the powder magazines of the fort, was prepared with great care, and placed under the command of Commander A. C. Rhind, who had associated with him on this perilous service Lieutenant S. W. Preston, Second Assistant Engineer A. T. Mullen of the United States steamer Argawam, and Acting-Master's Mate Paul Bayard, and seven men. So much had been said and written about the terrible effects of gunpowder in an explosion that happened lately in England, that great results were expected from this novel mode of making war. Everything that ingenuity could devise was adopted to make the experiment a success. The vessel was brought round from Norfolk with great care and without accident, in tow of the United States steamer Sassacus, Lieutenant-Commander J. L. Davis, who directed his whole attention to the matter in hand, and though he experienced some bad weather and lost one of his rudders, he took her safely into Beaufort, where we filled her up with powder, and perfected all the machinery for blowing her up.

Gen. Butler had arrived at the rendezvous before us, and I hastened matters all that I could, so that no unnecessary delay might be liable to my charge. On the 23rd inst. I sailed from Beaufort with all the monitors, the new Ironclads, and the small vessels, including the Louisiana, disguised as a blockade-runner, or the recondite twenty miles east of New Inlet, N. C., and found all the larger vessels and transports assembled there, the wind blowing light from the northeast. On the 23rd a heavy gale set in from the southwest, and not being able to make a port without scattering all the vessels, I determined to ride it out, which I did without accident of any kind, except the loss of a few anchors, the monitors all behaving beautifully. Only two vessels went to sea, in order to avoid the gale, and fared no better than those at anchor. The transports being short of water, put into Beaufort, N. C., and were not suitable for riding out at anchor such heavy weather.

After the southwest wind dropped around to the westward, and gave us a beautiful spell of weather, which I could not afford to lose, and the transports with the troops not making their appearance, I determined to take advantage of it and attack Fort Fisher and its outworks.

On the 23d I directed Commander Rhind to proceed and explode the vessel right under the walls of Fort Fisher. Mr. Bradford of the Coast Survey, having gone in at night and ascertained that we could place a vessel of seven feet draft right on the edge of the beach, Lieut. R. H. Lamson, commanding the Gettysburg, volunteered to go in the Wilderess, Acting-Master Henry Arey in command, and tow the Louisiana into position. At 10 p. m. the powder vessel started in toward the fort, and was towed by the Wilderess until the embankment of Fort Fisher was reached in sight. The Wilderess then cast off, and the Louisiana proceeded under steam until within 200 yards of the beach, and about 500 from the fort. Commander Rhind anchored her securely there, and coolly went to work to make all his arrangements to blow her up. This he was enabled to do owing to a blockade runner going in right ahead of him, the fort making the blockade runner signals, which they also did to the Louisiana. The gallant party, after coolly making all their arrangements for the explosion, left the vessel, the last thing they did being to set her on fire under the cabin, and then taking to their boats they made their escape off to the Wilderess lying close by. The Wilderess then put off shore with good speed to avoid any ill effects that might happen from the explosion.

At 45 minutes past one of the morning of the 24th, the explosion took place, and the shock was nothing like so severe as was expected; shock the vessels some and broke one or two places, but nothing more. At daylight of the 24th the fleet got under way and stood in line of battle. At 11:30 a. m. the signal was made to engage the forts, the Ironclads leading, and the Monadnock, Canonicus and Mahopac following. The Ironclads took her position in the most beautiful and sea-like manner, and opened a deliberate fire on the fort, which was firing at her with all its guns, which did not seem numerous on the north-east face, though we counted what appeared to be 17 guns. But four or five of these were fired from that direction, and they were silenced almost as soon as the Ironclads opened her terrific battery.

The Minnesota then took her position in handsome style, and her guns, after getting the range, were fired with rapidity, while the Mohican, the Colorado, and the large vessels marked on the plan, got to their stations, all firing to over the mounds and anchoring. By the time the last of the large vessels anchored and got the batteries into play, but one or two guns of the enemy were fired, this few being driven from the bomb-proofs.

The small gunboats Kansas, Unadilla, Payot, Seneca, Pontooner, Yantic and Huron took a position on the northward and the eastward of the monitors, and enfilading the works. The Shenandoah, Ticonderoga, Mackinaw, Tacony and Vanderbilt took effective positions, as marked on the chart, and added their fire to that already begun. The Santiago de Cuba, Fort Jackson, Osceola, Chippewa, Sassacus, Rhode Island, Monticello, Quaker City and Iasco dropped into position according to order, and the battle became general. In one hour and fifteen minutes after the first shot was fired, not a shot came from the fort. Two magazines had been blown up by our shells, and the fort set on fire in several places, and such a torrent of missiles were falling into and bursting over it, that it was impossible for anything human to stand it. Finding that the batteries were silenced completely, I directed the ships to keep up a moderate fire, in the hope of attracting the transports and bringing them in. At sunset Gen. Butler came in, in his flag-ship, with a few transports, the rest not having arrived from Beaufort. Being too late

to do anything more, I judged to the fleet to retire for the night to a safe anchorage, which they did without being molested by the enemy.

There were some mistakes made the day when the vessels went in to take position. My plan of battle being based on accurate calculations, and made on information to be relied on, was placed in the hands of each commander, and it seemed impossible to go astray if it was strictly followed. I required those vessels that had not followed it closely to get under way and assume their proper positions, which was done promptly and without confusion. The vessels were placed some what nearer to the works, and were able to throw in their shells, which were before falling in the water. One or two leading vessels having made the mistake of anchoring too far off, caused those coming after them to commit a like error, but when they got into place, and commenced work in earnest, the shower of shells (115 per minute) was irresistible. So quickly were the enemy's guns silenced, that not an officer or man was injured.

I regret, however, to have to report some severe casualties by the bursting of 100-pounder Parrott cannon. One burst on board the Ticonderoga, killing six of the crew and wounding seven others; another burst on board the Yankee, killing one officer and two men; another on the Juniata, killing two officers and wounding and killing ten others; another on the Mackinaw, killing one officer and wounding five other men; another on the Quaker City, wounding, I believe, two or three; another on the Susquehanna, killing and wounding seven. I think the bursting of the guns (six in all) much disconcerted the crews of the vessels where the accidents happened, and gave one and all a great distrust of the Parrott 100-pounder and as subsequent events proved, they were unfit for service and calculated to kill more of our men than those of the enemy. Some of the vessels were struck once or twice. The Mackinaw had her boiler perforated with a shell, and ten or twelve persons were badly scalded. The Osceola was struck with a shell near the magazine, and was at one time in a sinking condition, but her efficient commander stopped up the leak, while the Mackinaw fought out the battle, notwithstanding the damage she received. The Yantic was the only vessel which left the line to report damages. Commander John Guest, at the east end of the line, showed unusual intelligence in selecting the position and directing his fire. Twice his guns cut down the flag staff on the mound battery, and he silenced the guns there in a very short time, the Keystone State and Quaker City cooperating effectively.

Lieut. Commander J. R. Davis, with both rudders disabled got his vessel, the Sassacus, into close action, and assisted materially in silencing the works, and the Santiago de Cuba and the Fort Jackson took such positions as they could get, towing to other vessels not forming proper lines and throwing them out of place, and fought their guns well. The taking of a new position while under fire by the Brooklyn and Colorado was a beautiful sight, and when they got into place both ships delivered a fire that nothing could withstand. The Brooklyn still maintained her proud name under her present commander, Capt. James Allen, and the Colorado gave evidence that her commander, Commodore H. K. Thatcher, well understood the duties of his position. The Susquehanna was most effective in her fire, and was fortunate enough to obtain the right position, though much bothered by a vessel near her that had not found her right place.

The Mohican went into battle gallantly and fired rapidly and with effect, and when the Powhatan and Ticonderoga, and Shenandoah got into their positions they did good service. The Patuxent fell handsomely into line and did good service with the rest, and the Vanderbilt took position near the Minnesota and threw in a splendid fire.

The firing of the Monitors was excellent, and when their shells struck great damage was done, and the little gunboats that covered them kept up a fire sufficient to disconcert the enemy's aim.

The Rebels fired no more after the vessels all opened on them, except a few shots from the mound and upper batteries, which the Iasco and her consorts soon silenced. Our men were at work at the guns five hours and were glad to get a little rest. They came out of the action with rather a contempt for the Rebel batteries and anxious to renew the battle in the morning. On the 25th, all the transports had arrived, and Gen. Butler sent Gen. Weitzel to see me and arrange the programme for the day. It was decided that we should attack the forts again, while the army landed and assaulted them, if possible, under our heavy fire. I sent seventeen gunboats under the command of Capt. O. S. Gleason to cover the troops and assist with their boats in landing the soldiers. Finding the smaller vessels kept too far from the beach, which was quite bold, and sent in the Brooklyn to set them an example, which that vessel did, relying on every commander should on the information I gave him, in relation to the soundings. To this number was added all the small vessels that were covering the coast along. And finally I sent some eight or nine vessels that were acting under Command. Guest in endeavoring to find a way across the bar. This gave 100 small boats to land the troops with, besides those the army were already provided with, about 20 more.

At 7 a. m. on the 25th I made signal to get under way and form in line of battle, which was quickly done. The order to attack was given, and the Ironclads took position in her usual handsome style, the monitors following close after her. All the vessels followed according to orders, and took position without a shot being fired at them, excepting a few shots fired at the four last vessels that got into line. The firing this day was slow, only sufficient to annoy the enemy while the army landed, which they were doing five miles to the east of the fort. I suppose about three thousand men landed, when I was notified they were disembarking. I could see our soldiers near the fort reconnoitering and sharp-shooting, and was in hopes an assault was deemed practicable.

Gen. Weitzel, in person, was making observations about 600 yards off, and the troops were in and around the works. One gallant officer, whose name I do not know, went on the parapet and brought away the Rebel flag we had knocked down. A soldier went into the works and led out a horse, killing the orderly mounted on him, and taking his dispatches from the body. Another soldier fired his musket into the bomb-proof among the Rebels, and eight or ten others who had ventured near the forts were wounded by our shells.

As the ammunition gave out the vessels retired from action, and the Ironclads and Minnesota, Colorado and Susquehanna, were ordered to open rapidly, which they did with such effect that it seemed to tear the works to pieces. We drew off at sunset, leaving the iron-clads to fire through the night, expecting the Rebels would attack in the morning, when we would throw our shells into the works. I received word from Gen. Weitzel, informing me that it was impracticable to assault, and herewith inclosed a letter from Gen. Butler, assigning his reasons for withdrawing the troops. I also inclosed my answer.

In the bombardment of the 25th the men were engaged firing slowly for seven hours. The Rebels kept a couple of guns on the upper batteries firing on the vessels, hitting some of them several times without doing much damage. The Wabash and Powhatan being within their range, the object seemed mainly to be to disable them; but a rapid fire soon closed them up. Everything was coolly and systematically done throughout the day, and I witnessed most beautiful practice.

The army commenced landing about 2 o'clock, Capt. Gleason in the Santiago de Cuba having shelled Flag-Pond Battery to insure a safe landing, and they commenced disembark about 5 o'clock. The weather coming on thick and rainy, about a brigade were left on the beach during the night, covered by the gunboats. As our troops landed, 63 Rebel soldiers hoisted the white flag, and delivered themselves up, and were taken prisoners by the seamen landing the troops, and conveyed to the Santiago de Cuba; and 215 more gave themselves up to the reconnoitering party, all being desirous to quit the war.

I don't pretend to put my opinion in opposition to Gen. Weitzel, who is a thorough soldier and an able engineer, and whose business it is to know more of assaulting than I do. But I can't help thinking that it was worth while to make the attempt after coming so far.

About 12 o'clock I sent in a detachment of double-enders, under Commander John Guest, to see if I could effect an entrance through the channel. The great number of wrecks in and about the bar has changed the whole formation, and where the original channel was we found a shallow bar. I sent Lieut. W. B. Cushing in to sound, and buy out a channel if he could find one, with orders to Commander Guest to drag for torpedoes and be ready to run in by the booms when ordered. One boat belonging to the Tacony was sunk by a shell, and a man had his leg cut off, still they stuck to their work until ordered to withdraw for other duty.

In conclusion, allow me to draw your attention to the conduct of Commander Rhind and Lieut. Preston. They engaged in the most perilous adventure that was perhaps ever undertaken; and though no material result has taken place from the effects of the explosion that we know of, still it was not their fault. As an incentive to others I beg leave to recommend them for promotion. Also that of Lieut. R. H. Lamson who piloted them in and brought them off. No one in the squadron considered that their lives would be saved, and Capt. Rhind and Lieut. Preston had made an arrangement to sacrifice themselves in case the vessel was beached, a thing likely to happen. I inclose herewith the report of Commander Rhind with the names of the gallant fellows who volunteered for the desperate service.

Allow me to mention also the name of Mr. Bradford of the Coast Survey, who has always patiently performed every duty he has ever been called on to carry out.

My thanks are due to Lieut. Commander K. R. Brees, Fleet Captain, for carrying out my orders to the fleet during the action and for his general usefulness; to Lieut. Commander H. A. Adams, for promptness in supplying the fleet with ammunition; to Lieut. M. W. Sanders, Signal Officer, whose whole time was occupied in making signals, and who performed his duty well; and to my aides, Lieut. S. W. Terry, and Lieut. S. W. Preston who afforded me valuable assistance.

I have not yet received a list of the casualties, but believe they are very few from the enemy's guns. We had killed and wounded about 45 persons by the bursting of the Parrott guns.

I must not omit to pay a tribute to the officers and crews of the monitors riding out the heavy gales on an open coast, without murmuring or complaining of the want of comfort which must have been very serious. They have shown a degree of fortitude and perseverance seldom witnessed. Usually brave in battle they take the closest work with pleasure, and the effect of their shells is terrific.

The following are the names of the commanders, and I hope I shall ever keep them under my command: Commanders E. G. Parrott of the Monadnock, and E. R. Calhoun of the Sanguis. Lieut. Commanders George L. Pelham of the Canonicus, and E. E. Potter of the Mahopac.

There are about 1,000 men left on shore by the army, who have not got off yet on account of the surf on the beach. These will be got off in the morning, and the soldiers will then be sent home.

I inclose the general order for the attack. I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
DAVID D. PORTER, Rear-Admiral.

HON. GILSON WELLS, Secretary of the Navy,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

GEN. BUTLER'S LETTER.

HQ. DEPT. OF VA. AND N. C., Dec. 29, 1864.

ADMIRAL: Upon landing the troops and making a thorough reconnaissance of Fort Fisher, both Gen. Weitzel and myself are fully of the opinion that the place could not be carried by assault, as it was too substantially unimpaired as a defensive work by the navy fire. We found seventeen guns protected by traverses, two only of which were dismantled, bearing up the beach and covering a strip of land, the only practicable route; not wide enough for artillery and men in line of battle.

Having captured Flag Pond Battery, the perimeter of which, sixty-five men and two commissioned officers, were taken off by the navy, we also captured Half-Moon Battery, and seven officers and 294 men of the Third North Carolina Junior Reserves, including its commander, from whom I learned that a portion of Hoke's Division, consisting of Kirkland's and Hagood's Brigades, had been sent from the lines before Richmond on Tuesday last, arriving at Wilmington Friday night.

Gen. Weitzel advanced his skirmish line within fifty yards of the fort, while the garrison was kept in their bomb-proofs by the fire of the navy, and so closely that three or four men of the picket line ventured upon the parapet and through the Sally port of the works, capturing a horse, which they brought off, killing the orderly, who was the bearer of a dispatch from the Chief of Artillery of Gen. Whiting, to bring a light battery within the fort; and also brought away from the parapet the flag of the fort. This was done while the shells of the navy were falling about the heads of the daring men who entered the works; and it was evident, as soon as the fire of the navy ceased, because of the darkness, that the fort was fully manned again, and opened with grape and canister upon our picket line.

Finding that nothing but the operations of a regular siege, which did not come within my instructions, would reduce the fort, and in view of the threatening aspect of the weather, the wind arising from the south-west rendering it impossible to make further landing through the surf, I caused the troops with their provisions to disembark, and I saw nothing further that could be done by the land forces. I shall therefore sail for Hampton Roads as soon as the transport fleet can be got in order.

My engineers and officers report Fort Fisher to me as substantially unimpaired as a defensive work. I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
BENJ. F. BUTLER, Maj.-Gen. Commanding.

TO REAR-ADMIRAL PORTER.

NORTH ATLANTIC SQUADRON, U. S. FLAGSHIP MALVERN, OFF NEW INLET, N. C., Dec. 29, 1864.

GENERAL: I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this date, the substance of which was communicated to me by Gen. Weitzel last night. I have ordered the largest vessels to proceed off Beaufort to fill up with ammunition to be ready for another attack in case it is decided to proceed with this matter after making other arrangements. We have not any more firing rapidly yet, and could keep any Rebels inside from showing their heads until an assaulting column was within 30 yards of the works. I wish some of your gallant fellows had followed the officer who took the flag from the parapet, and the brave fellow who brought the horse out from the fort. I think they would have found it an easier conquest than is sup-

posed. I do not, however, pretend to place my opinion in opposition to Gen. Weitzel, whom I know to be an accomplished soldier and engineer, and whose opinion has great weight with me.

I will look out that the troops are all off in safety. We will have a west wind presently, and a smooth beach about 3 o'clock, when sufficient boats will be sent for them. The prisoners now on board the Santiago de Cuba will be delivered to the Provost-Marshal at Fortress Monroe, unless you wish to take them on board one of the transports, which would be inconvenient just now.

I remain, General, respectfully, your obedient servant,  
DAVID D. PORTER, Rear-Admiral.

TO MAJ.-GEN. B. F. BUTLER, Commanding, &c. &c.

The Wilmington Expedition—The Attack—Recall of the Land Forces.

Special Dispatch to The N. Y. Tribune.

PORTER'S MONITOR, Tuesday, Dec. 27—p. m.

The attack upon the Rebel batteries commanding the approaches to Wilmington was commenced at noon of Saturday and continued through that and the following day. The troops were landed at Fisher's Point between 12 and 2 o'clock Sunday, under cover of the gunboats, and proceeded to assault Fort Fisher, which the heavy fire from our fleet had well nigh silenced. Gen. Butler subsequently issued an order to recall and reembarc the troops. This order was issued shortly before sundown. Before midnight the troops, with the exception of one regiment, which on account of the heavy surf on the beach could not get off in the boats, were all again on board the transports.

The explosion of the powder boat took place at two o'clock on the morning of Saturday, within 300 yards of the fort. The extent of the damage caused by the explosion is not known, but is believed to have been great.

Gen. Butler left for Fortress Monroe in his flagship the Beaufort, at an early hour Sunday. Admiral Porter expresses his determination to stay and fight it out with the soldiers and marines. Several of his larger frigates were actually engaged when the dispatch boat left.

Admiral Porter Confident of Success.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, Dec. 29, 1864.

The steamer Rat arrived here this afternoon, bringing dispatches from Admiral Porter.

She ran aground down the Potomac River yesterday. She should have reached here a day or two ago.

Porter was still vigorously bombarding Fort Fisher, and expresses himself as confident of being able to take it.

SECOND DISPATCH.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, Dec. 29, 1864.

The Associated Press Reporter, who went out with the Wilmington expedition, sends the following:

I have just the moment (1:30 p. m.) arrived here in the steamer Rat, which brings Lieut. Preston, bearer of dispatches from Admiral Porter, and I am surprised to hear reports prevalent of the abandonment of the expedition. They are not true. Our fleet were still bombarding Fort Fisher when I left.

The dispatch from Fortress Monroe is correct.

LATER FROM RICHMOND PAPERS.

Jeff. Davis Proclaims the Attempt to Capture the Steamer Michigan in Lake Erie and Release the Johnson's Island Prisoners an Act of War done under his Authority—The Union Raid in South-Western Virginia, &c.

We have Richmond papers of Monday and Tuesday last. The main feature of their editorials is the advocacy of the appointment of a Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate armies. Gen. Lee, of course, is the man. They are also distressed because the Yankees do not go into Winter quarters, but continue to make war just as if it were mid-summer.

JEFF. DAVIS'S PROCLAMATION ABOUT BORDER RAIDS.

Whereas, It has been made known to me that Benedict G. Burley, an Acting-Master in the Navy of the Confederate States, is now under arrest in one of the British North American Provinces, on an application made by the Government of the United States for the delivery to that Government of the said Benedict G. Burley, under the treaty known as the extradition Treaty now in force between the United States and Great Britain;

And Whereas, It has been represented to me that said demand for the extradition of said Benedict G. Burley is based on the charge, that said Burley is a fugitive from justice, accused of having committed the crimes of robbery and piracy within the jurisdiction of the United States;

And Whereas, It has been further made known to me that the accusations and charges made against said Benedict G. Burley are based solely on the act and conduct of said Burley in an enterprise of expedition made on the month of September last (1864) for the purpose of robbing the steamer Michigan, an armed vessel of the United States, navigating the lakes on the boundary line between the United States and the said British North American Provinces, and for the release of some citizens of the United States held at a certain place called Johnson's Island;

And Whereas, said enterprise or expedition for the capture of said armed steamer Michigan, and for the release of the said prisoners, was a deliberate and premeditated act of piracy, and was conducted by the authority of the Government of the Confederate States, and constituted to its commissioned officers for execution, among which officers is the said Benedict G. Burley;

I, therefore, I, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, do hereby declare and make known to all whom it may concern, that the expedition aforesaid, undertaken in the month of September last, for the capture of the said steamer Michigan, was a deliberate and premeditated act of piracy, and was conducted by the authority of the Government of the Confederate States of America, and that the Government of the Confederate States of America assumes the responsibility of answering for the said act and conduct of any of its commissioned officers engaged in said expedition, and especially of said Benedict G. Burley, an Acting-Master in the Navy of the Confederate States.

And I do further make known to all whom it may concern that in the order and instructions given to the said Benedict G. Burley in said expedition, they were specially directed and enjoined to "abstain from violating any of the laws and regulations of the Canadian or British authorities in relation to neutrality," and that the consultation necessary to effect the purpose of said expedition was held at a place called Johnson's Island, and such assistance as they might (you may) draw from the army's country.

In testimony whereof I have signed this manifesto, and directed the same to be sealed with the seal of the Department of State of the Confederate States of America, and to be made public.

Done at the city of Richmond on this twenty-fourth day of December, 1864.

JEFFERSON DAVIS, President.

JOHN P. MCKIM, Secretary of State.

LOSS OF SAVANNAH OF NO ACCOUNT.

render more difficult the defense of Charleston or Augusta, as many supposed for between Savannah and Charleston is Beaufort and Port Royal, which the Yankees have long held without disturbance; and Beaufort, not Savannah, would have been, and always will be, the point d'appui for a land attack on Charleston when that is made.

The loss of Savannah is no hurt to us, when the whole garrison is saved. The loss of Vicksburg would not have been irreparable, if Davis had not thrown away an army in it; and the loss of Savannah is a real gain when the garrison increases the Confederate army in the field, if the enemy diminishes his army to furnish a Federal garrison to Savannah.

This, however, he is not much likely to do. In his usual holder-like, vain-glorious and bombastic Union style Sherman tells his friends that when the sun comes to move northward, he, Sherman, will follow the sun's example; and as there is every reason to believe that he will keep his word, and so conceivable hindrance to the Confederate cause, it is not surprising that he makes no secret of his destination. It is Richmond. Nor of his route. That lies from South and North Carolina.

FROM WILMINGTON.

WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA, December 25.—The city of Wilmington, including two monitors, several armed vessels and many heavily armed frigates and sloops-of-war, made a furious attack on Fort Fisher about 1 o'clock yesterday, and kept up an average fire of thirty shots per minute until night. Our loss was not wounded.

The attack was renewed at 10 o'clock this morning. The attack has been very furious, and continues. No report of casualties today.

Col. Lamb, who is command of the fort, replied to the enemy's fire bravely and deliberately.

The enemy, under cover of the heavy fire, landed about three brigades two and a half miles above Fort Fisher. They were immediately engaged by a smaller force.

The enemy held his ground at night.

WILMINGTON, N. C., Dec. 26.—The enemy's infantry attacked Fort Fisher last night. They were repulsed with heavy losses. The enemy's heavy rain and wind through the night. Prisoners report the Twenty-fourth corps of the Yankee army present, under Butler.

THE RAID ON POLLARD.

MOBILE, December 19, 1864.—The Yankee raiders from Pensacola to Pollard destroyed all public and some private buildings, damaged the road and railroad, and carried off a large amount of property. The steamer was partly destroyed. Captain Henry Pope, quartermaster, was captured. A few negroes were stolen. Yesterday our forces pursued them. A portion of their supplies and transportation were captured. The road was strewn with their dead.

There was an infantry force of another raiding party near Good's mills and Pensacola. Sunday its advance was met by our cavalry and driven back several miles. Capt. Semmes arrived here yesterday from Europe via Matanzas.

The Rebel War News.

From The Richmond Dispatch, Dec. 27.

The armies of the Potomac and James still keep within their lines. Grant is quietly awaiting the result of the attack on Fort Fisher.

THE ATTEMPTED RAID ON GORDONSVILLE.

The following from Gen. Lee, received on Saturday, is supplementary to his dispatch published in our last issue.

"HON. ARMY OF NORTH VIRGINIA,"

Dec. 29, 1864.

"Hon. JAMES A. SEDDON, Secretary of War, Gen. Fitz Lee reports that the force which attacked Gen. Lee on yesterday consisted of two divisions of the enemy's cavalry, under Gen. Torbert.

"The enemy was posted across the Madison turnpike, 25 miles from Gordonsville, and was in a position to cut off our communication with the city.

"The enemy was handsomely repulsed, and retired about 3 p. m., leaving some of his dead on the field. He traveled too rapidly last night for our troops to engage him, having passed back our camp twelve miles from Gordonsville, one hour after dark.

"Thirty-two prisoners, captured by the enemy at Liberty Mills on the 23d, being unable to keep up on the retreat, were liberated.

"The loss of the war was light.

"The following official dispatch, which was received on Sunday, explains the situation of affairs in South-western Virginia, and conveys the gratifying intelligence that the enemy has at length been driven out of that country.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY NORTH VIRGINIA,

Dec. 29, 1864.

"Hon. JAMES A. SEDDON, Secretary of War, Gen. Breckinridge reports that the enemy, after having been roughly handled in the engagements of Saturday and Sunday, near Marion, having been driven back and wounded, has retreated to the north of the city of Salisbury during the night of the 28th.

"The garrison [Salisbury] retreated up Rich Valley.

"Gen. Breckinridge's advance arrived at daylight on the 29th, and the enemy retired that night and on the morning of the 30th toward Hectors Gap.

"The enemy is being pursued by our troops bearing the fatigue and exposure with great cheerfulness.

"The damage to the salt works at Chesapeake is repaired.

"Many depots and bridges on the Virginia and North Carolina Railroad have been burned.

SAVANNAH EVACUATED—A COLUMN OF THE ENEMY MOVING SOUTH—WEST FROM SAVANNAH.

From official intelligence received here late Friday night, we learn that Savannah, in pursuance of a plan sometime previously decided upon, was evacuated on the morning of the 28th inst. through the city of Savannah, and was evacuated without other loss than of such materials as from their bulk and weight could not be conveniently removed. The last of our troops crossed the Savannah River at 3 o'clock a. m. on the 21st, and marched in the direction of Charleston.

At 5 o'clock a. m. the enemy entered the city, which was surrendered by the Mayor. Our engineer troops held the bridges by which our troops had crossed until 6 o'clock a. m., and then destroyed them, and followed our march by land and by water, and conducted in perfect good order and without accident. Sherman was not aware of the movement until it had been accomplished.

An official dispatch from General Breckinridge, dated December 25 and received yesterday, states that General Hardee reports that a force of the enemy—infantry, artillery and cavalry—has moved from Savannah towards the Alabama River.

Gen. Hardee has made proper dispositions to check the column, the object of which is probably to destroy the Savannah, Albany and Gulf Railroad, its depots, &c.